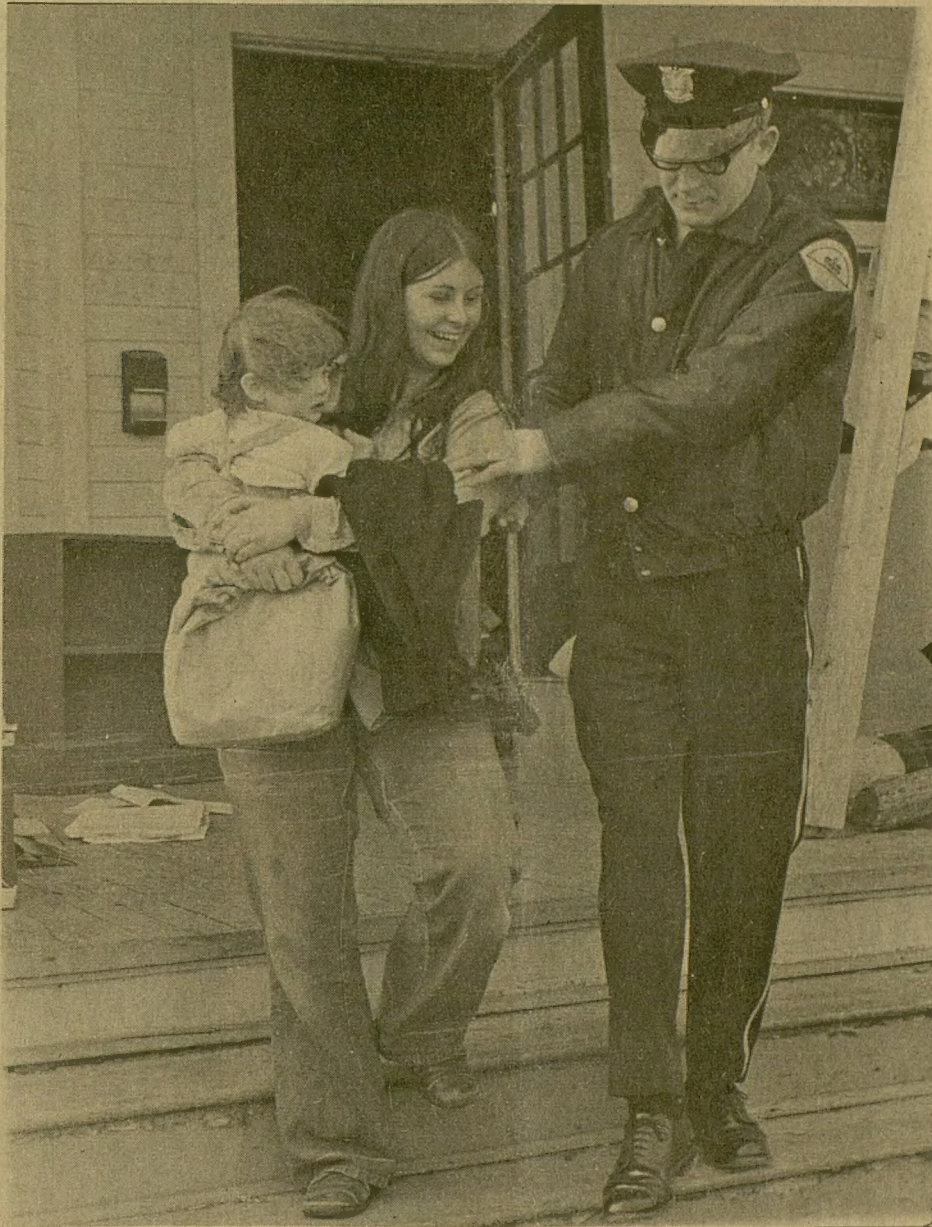


ATLANTA LESBIAN FEMINIST ALLIANCE  
P. O. BOX 5502  
ATLANTA, GA. 30307

JAN 4 1987

# Ain't I a Woman?

21#15  
4-30-71  
25¢



*The University rips off so many people in so many ways everyday - by its existence as an institution designed to propagate the bullshit society puts down on us from the time we are children, by its business dealings with fat cats which make them fatter, by its attitudes toward people and property - in too many ways to list.*

*No one in the University power structure will come out and admit women are discriminated against - but it is a fact that we are. It becomes really apparent in their policies and actions.*

*When we were busted Sunday and kicked out of our daycare center by the University I was ripped off for the freedom to develop myself as a woman in the role in which I see myself. I am now being forced into the female role in which society (and the University as an arm of that society)*

*would like to see me - a woman who must contend with dirty diapers and dishes 24 hours a day. I was ripped off because a piece of property is more important to them than a person with real and urgent needs.*

*My child was ripped off for a place in which she could grow in a better atmosphere. I teach her to share, but they stole from her the chance to break out of the bullshit of this society and the damaging head hassles that accompany it. They are trying to force her into the same thing I was forced into as a child - to go to school and take the required home economics course (because "that's a woman's role in this society"). And they'll stuff shit into her head until she forgets what a real woman is. But only if we let them.*

# CAROL TRUDY LINDA DALE PAT JEANIE ANN Who We Are VICKIE

We are a collective of nine women who put out AIAW. What the paper is and how it changes is a reflection of what the nine of us are, collectively and individually, how we change and what is affecting us. We never had any set, easily verbalized purpose for the paper nor did we have any particular audience in mind. We are all in the women's movement so, in a sense, we write a movement paper because we write about ourselves and our concerns. We feel that communication is important to the women's movement at all levels.

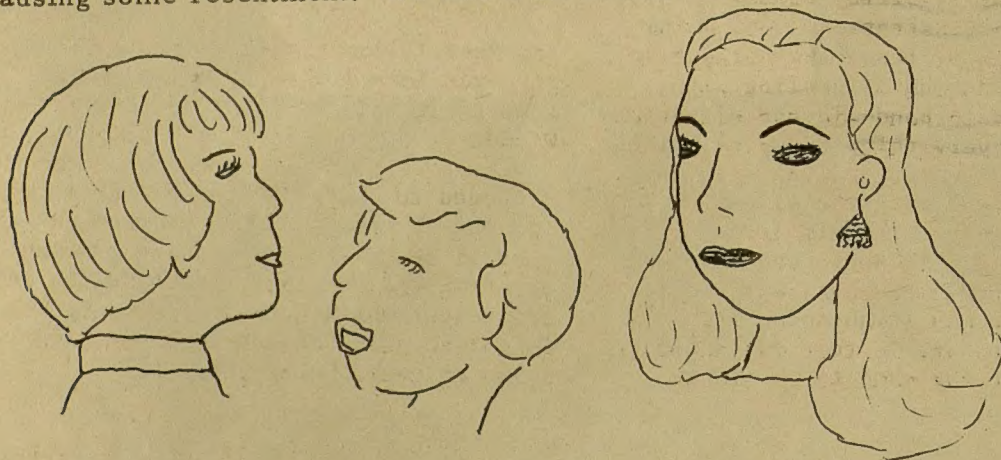
We realize that much of what we write is not introductory material to recruit new women, but we question the concept that everything should be an introduction for women not yet active in the movement. We write from where we are. None of us are newly active and our concerns and struggles change and progress with out involvement. We think it is important to write about and analyze our struggles at the place we are now; to communicate this to all women who read AIAW, as well as making things clearer to ourselves.

Our life styles affect what each of us brings to the group. Three of us live with men, four of us are members of the first women's living collective in Iowa City and we meet and have our office in that collective. Obviously, we are affected greatly by the living collective and their problems. The rest of us live with women. Most of us are gay.

By the time we put out our first issue there was already a Gay Women's Cell in Iowa City and some members of AIAW belonged to it, so when we began our paper we were already dealing with lesbianism. No one had to "come out" within the paper collective. The struggle of dealing with that part of our lives in our collective of some straight, some gay, some confused, some celibate, etc. has really been important to all of us.

Economic class backgrounds and our present economic situations greatly affect how we work together and what we write about. Some of us have steady jobs, some of us have more time to work on the paper because we haven't been working. Some of us cannot find jobs and don't have money, some of us are afraid of losing our jobs. The tensions of the present economic situation in this country are hitting most of us pretty hard. Some of us have some advantages, education, middle class backgrounds, money--most of us do not.

What we do collectively to put out the paper is time consuming and fairly disciplined. We meet at least twice a week, often late into the night. We all attend the meetings. Missing one is a big deal and means you are angry, freaked out, sick or some thing like that. We all show up to put the paper together the week before it comes out, generally three or four nights of work. The shit work has not been very collective, mostly falling on one member or two at times, and this has been difficult for us to deal with, causing some resentment. We talk a lot among ourselves about,



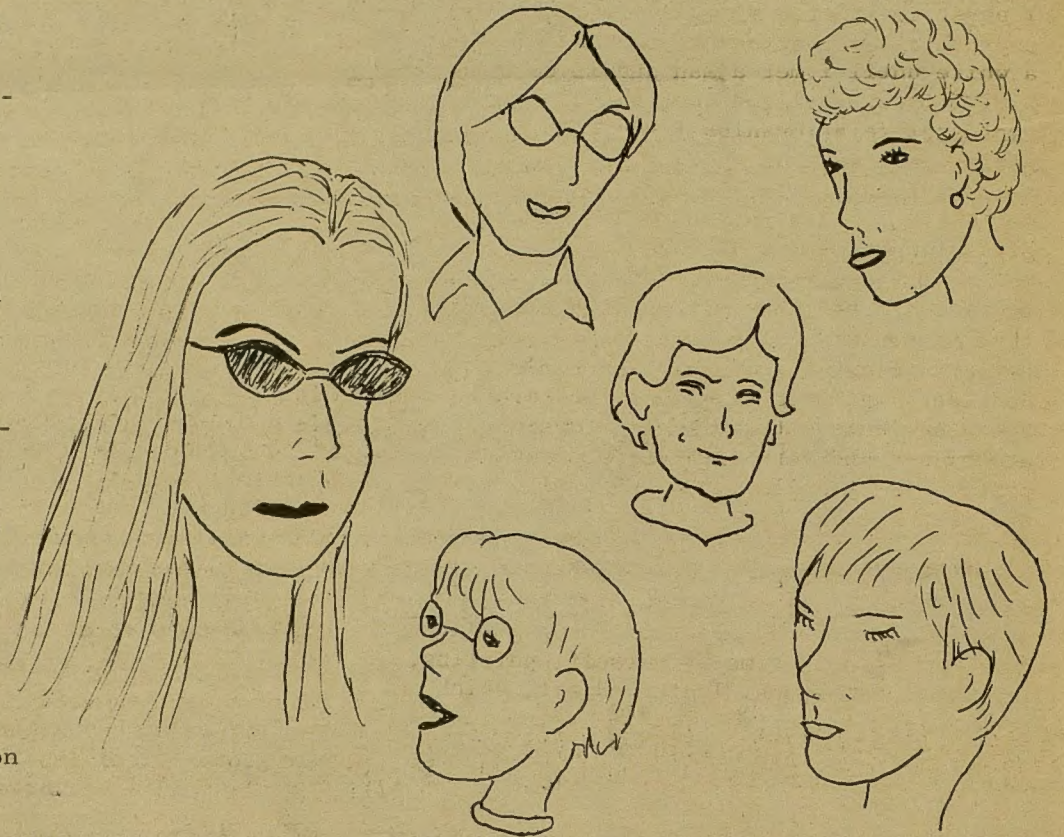
subjects we deal with in the paper and about other things important to us. For some of us - most of us - AIAW collective is our priority, our project, support, and consciousness-raising group.

We get an enormous amount of mail and are strongly affected by reading other papers and articles that women not publishing a paper probably don't see. It is exciting to get a good, new paper or publication and we want to share those with other women. When crises happen elsewhere--as when It Ain't Me Babe (paper published in Berkeley) stopped--it affects us.

But we are also influenced by what is happening here. All of us are a part of a loosely organized women's community. We have parties often, we gather at the living collective. Often the struggles we have are internal ones -- ones that go on within either our collective or within that women's community. We are constantly dealing with the problems of gay women, personal relationships, women living together, etc. Our community is of prime importance to most of us. It is less clear just how we are affected by Iowa City or how we as women affect it.

Iowa City is a university town surrounded by farmland. The population of Iowa City is 50,000. 20,000 of those are students. We are not crowded together or hassled in the same way as those living in urban areas. Nor are there as many non-women's "Movement" activities or groups to relate to. The nine of us are strong separatists and none of us relate much to other struggles in this town although there aren't many anyway.

It has been isolating to be a collective whose work isn't something that other women have to relate to in terms of support. We occasionally request that articles be written, we request that people subscribe or buy issues but we don't need steady volunteers like a daycare group needs or women to show up in large numbers for a public action. We often decide how to relate to other women's projects or groups as a collective and more often than not we don't relate heavily because of the time and energy putting out the paper takes or because we are critical of the project. We are pretty dedicated to self-criticism and ideological struggle. We rarely respond to events or projects with unquestioned enthusiasm. We analyze, criticize, and debate what is being done, how and why.



Many of us individually have put in lots of time on other things like volunteering at the daycare center, but we don't have the time to become heavily involved in the meetings or planning of those projects. It is very hard to achieve group cohesiveness. We have been able to do this and others, seeing that, are generally terrified. Dealing with one of us is really dealing with one plus eight.

Within our own female community we are seen as heavies, disciplined, etc. In a way, we are fairly isolated because of the political opinions we hold (anti-capitalist and separatist) and this has really affected the paper. We have reprinted things that we think are important and we know would never be reprinted in "movement papers" or in many women's papers that are aimed primarily at women not already involved in the movement. Most of the things we have reprinted we think are really important to read and re-read. Many say what we would say, so rather than duplicate we have run some things published elsewhere to make our point.

Still, we write most of what is in our paper and publishing every three weeks makes time scarce for most of us. We know sometimes that what we write does not really explain itself -- like what experiences have prompted us to write what we're writing. We are explaining who we are because of criticisms we have received from readers, our own doubts about the worth of what we are doing, perhaps a desire to justify ourselves, perhaps to sort out for our own benefit the reasons behind what we do, what our paper is.

We generally look at AIAW as a whole from the first issue we put out till the present and all that entails: changes in our opinions, scope of subjects dealt with, etc. We know that our perspective of what we do is not always the same as our readers who read one issue at a time and have no why of knowing everything in our heads, what's really affecting us, etc. We know that our paper is not an end in itself, that things change and we all grow.

Right now putting out the paper is a struggle. Sustaining a project that entails so much time and work, including so much shit work, is wearing on all of us. We are all tired from a busy year, and many of us are going through real hard times: financially, with our living situations, or our personal relationships.

We've seen other papers split apart by tensions that seem no greater than those we live with. We've seen few papers sustained that are doing what we are trying to do: to report our own internal struggles and thoughts. We have not been open for any woman to come and work on the paper and thereby become involved in the women's movement. Too many one-time-only papers add up to the same burst of enthusiasm and never grow to anything else. We have all done speaking, "organizing" and worked on other projects--but for us the newspaper has been a special kind of space.

One of the hardest things for me to deal with is leaving the women of the AIAW collective, here in Iowa City.

Before I came here, without a doubt, I was a girl whose heterosexual commitment was indisputable. I think that I really believed all those books, (starting with the bible), the movies and all other misinformation that our society calls the socialization of a young girl into her role of woman. Its funny, because I was sure that I didn't believe the lies that they told me in Hebrew School or from my parents. What I didn't know is that every word that men wrote into the dictionary was a lie, that words are designed and defined to fit our usefulness to men. I knew that in my relationships with men, my ideas would not be listened to, but I never considered my woman friends in any other way than people to live with for a while until I met a man and lived with him. I never realized that the close emotional relationships I had with my girlfriends were as valid with regard to a commitment to each other, as a relationship with a man might be. One of my girlfriends told me she was in love with me and I thought she was "dragging me down" to some horrible perversion. Actually I thought she wanted to "control" me. I never gave her the support she needed, because I was totally male-oriented. Because I felt extremely uncomfortable around men and very rarely dated, my parents first called me "an intellectual", and then accused me of being a lesbian which caused me hysteria, vomiting and I'm sure the beginning of several stomach ailments which later followed. I guess they felt it was "unnatural" for a girl to spend so much time by herself, painting, or with girlfriends. I studied art, which is the only respectable option given to freaks, and for a while thought I had found a place with people I could be comfortable with, and who would listen to me. Except the art world is a male world, and it was that, I think, that made me venture into the women's movement. I felt that I had no choice. I began to realize how impossible it was to be an independent woman in a male-world. I got the usual sexist bullshit encouragement from all the men teachers I had in art school, but there were no women artist-teachers around that I could identify with. It took me a while to realize that this situation was not uncommon in any of the schools in this country, which meant that one of the few ways an artist could earn money with time free to pursue her own work was denied to a woman, so that she was effectively cut off before she had a chance to mature.

About AIAW- I came here because I wanted to see what it was like to work with woman only. First of all no one raised her voice, and everyone waited for each person to speak, and everyone was listened to, and everyone's ideas and experiences were considered relevant.

Now 8 months later- how do I relearn to love women? My previous experiences with love were if I like a guy I went to bed with him, where all personal problems were displayed and possibly discussed, the sexual relationship was the main part of the relationship, with anger, frustration all tied up with sex.

Here we are, 9 women, and when it comes to discussing our anger, frustration within our group I feel impotent to react, because I don't feel I can break that intellectual barrier we have set up in our meetings. A barrier that excludes personal relationships with one another. In trying to relate honestly, I feel very close to all of you, yet I am withdrawn emotionally. I live with a man and this is a contradiction to my feelings about woman, and I am scared of relating emotionally to a group, because all my previous experience has been with individuals.

A few weeks ago, Pat expressed rage and resentment over our inability to deal with her anger and frustration about doing the shit work which we then make collective decisions about. Instead of dealing with her rage, we tried to band-aid the situation. I experience that very thing in my relationship to a man, that never dealing with the personal, but instead with the situation. I got so upset as to put myself into situations where I would be forced to miss the next 2 collective meetings, all the time rationalizing why I was doing it. What I am trying to say is that our collective seems somewhat the same to me (in my

limited heterosexual experience) to other personal-emotional relationships, yet we do draw lines and this I find confusing and frustrating. I don't know if we could work better if we related to each other in a more personal way.

But can we be in love with each other in our collective, without any physicality? We were going to talk about asexuality but never did, and have never talked about sex in any way.

What I still don't know is what I want from a collective - woman experience. Everytime I experience moments where I see glimpses of what its about, I feel frightened because of the amount of love I feel, part of an opening of all the protected areas of myself.

Another thing I feel most strongly is the contradiction I feel by relating to the man I live with. At this point I can't see any way of relating to both men and women emotionally, which probably adds to my frustration and inability to act, which leads back to commitment and discipline. I missed 2 meetings because I couldn't deal with my personal feelings in the group, (this whole thing is very me-oriented and self indulgent, but I don't know how to express it any other way). How much does the contradiction in my emotions extend into the discipline during meetings, and result in an inconsistency of action?

In raising these questions I think the amount of time we are willing or able to spend with each other should be considered. We meet between 8-14 hours a week, some some of us live with men, and some of us are not intending to stay in Iowa City due to other commitments.

I think the inconsistency between intellectual analysis and actions will continue to lead to incredible frustration. That total dedication for a revolutionary change, which the woman who is involved in struggling and fighting for woman in engaged in, I find lacking in myself. I think this is due to the way I continue to live, and how much of what I have learned (called middle-class priveleges) I am unwilling to give up.

The more I identify with woman, the stronger I feel what it means to be a woman in this world ruled by men. Without the women in this collective, I could never have developed the strength I needed to recognize the potentiality for change in myself, to understand what it means to love a woman. I wish the time was now that the anger, hatred and resentment I have learned could be forgotten and that the love you have shown me could be reciprocated.

# Women's Center

we don't all know the whole story on how the WOMEN'S CENTER first came about. some women knew we needed a place and now we've got one. it was a quonset hut in finkbine park; living room, kitchen, two bedrooms, bathroom and some closet space. now it's the WOMEN'S CENTER at 1108 finkbine; one large telephone-reception-sitting-party room, one kitchen, one play room, one crashing room, a bathroom, some closet space (literature storing).

the WOMEN'S CENTER has begun with the idea that many iowa city women have no way of meeting other women to develop strong friendships. often, women just want to get away from families or roommates for awhile. women still don't have easy access to information such as where to go for

abortion referral, birth control, good women's literature, how to get in touch with existing women's groups. lots of women want a consciousness-raising group but don't know where to go for that. now there is a place to go or a number to call for all these things. the number is 334-9577, listed under SISTER POWER in directory assistance.

the WOMEN'S CENTER can also be a meeting place for women's groups already involved in women's liberation. there are quite a few cells existing in iowa city and some of us don't know of the others or what work other cells are doing. the WOMEN'S CENTER will house a speakers' bureau involving as many women as possible who are able to speak to high schools, groups,

etc. we hope to get a typewriter and a mimeo graph machine so that we can pool our information and literature at the CENTER.

we need lots of support. our rent is \$68 a month and we will have a phone bill. we have enough of a staff right now to keep the phone covered from 12 to 8 p.m. daily and we're hoping that women will come over on friday and saturday nights to rap. but we can use as much staff help as we can get. (the staff meetings are every sunday at 4:30 in the WOMEN'S CENTER And are open for any women interested). the CENTER will be unlocked 24 hours a day. if someone is crashing there, she will, of course, be able to lock the door from the inside. it's our place, sisters, and it's O.K.!

Mother  
of my special friend  
Mother of my lover  
and her brother  
Mother whom I longed  
to be daughter of,  
When did your face grow so drawn?

Was it being the plain daughter  
Or when your husband died?  
And you packed up your home  
and children and moved  
to Iowa to begin again?  
Was it the school saying you  
hadn't provided a normal home?  
How did you keep from telling them?

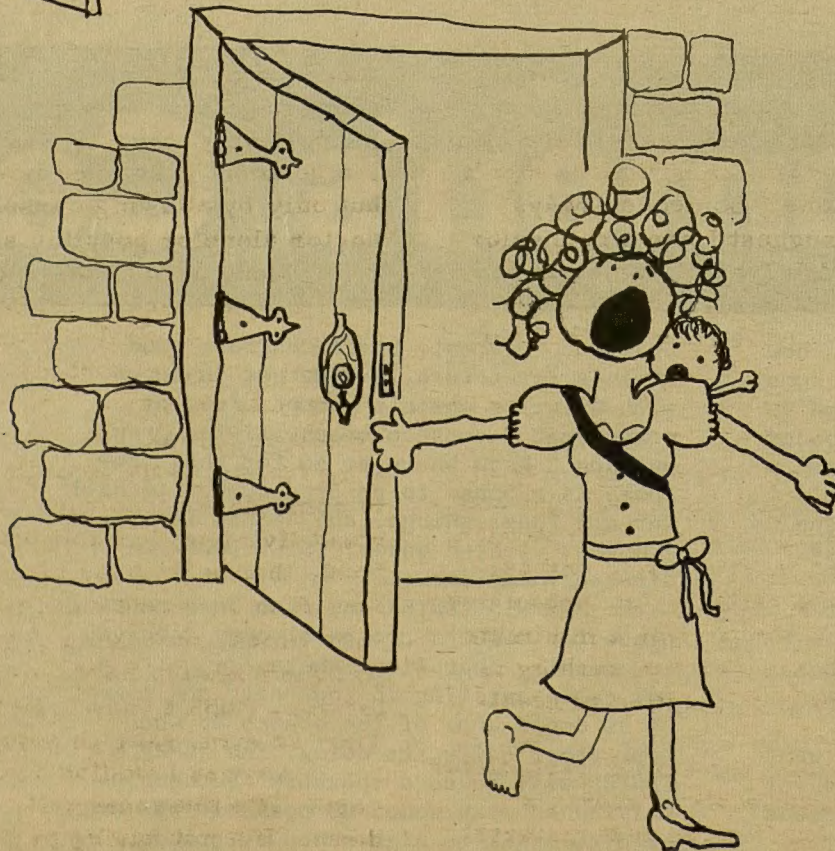
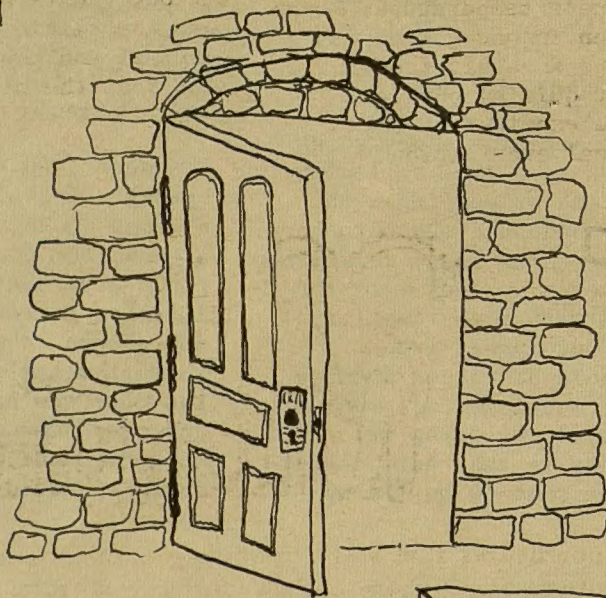
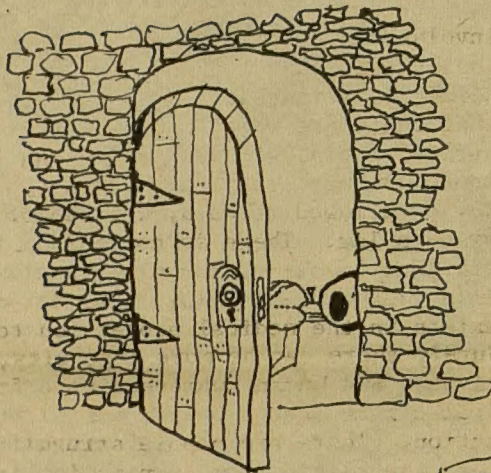
Dead a husband/her father  
Dead your only son/her brother.

Yet sitting there  
your face remained  
as I remembered it,  
Tears coming,  
but as no surprise  
to its expression.

Then  
"Because he was in the Navy,"  
the minister said  
"The Navy Hymn."  
For those in peril on the sea.

And I cried  
because the Navy Hymn  
bound us in a way you never knew  
during the year  
I lived with your daughter  
without your blessing.  
Late at night  
it would be played  
by a station going off the air  
accompanied by pictures of the ocean  
and I imagined you watching  
those same waves  
with worry kept well back from your eyes,  
wishing your son  
safe travel on the sea.  
So many weeks suffered with you  
in understanding of your Mother-pain  
many letters written  
never sent.  
Because of our difference  
over your daughter

I came to the service for your son  
wanting to be near  
for her sake and yours,  
but prepared  
to be received in coolness.  
And when you welcomed me  
with both your hands,  
the quickness of my response  
to bend and touch your cheek with mine,  
surprised me.  
Until I remembered  
how often I'd imagined us greeting in that way.  
How often I'd imagined you accepting me  
finally.



cinderella has escaped.

once  
she chased a prince  
and was caught  
in a glass slipper - size 5.

she went from washtub to sauna  
in an easy dream of feminine reward.

cinderella got pregnant,  
she got bored,  
she was dying and she couldn't breathe.

her dream was a nightmare  
and cinderella cursed  
the fairy god-mother  
for not telling her the rest of the tale.  
(happily-ever-after was the lie.)

and one night  
after the prince - now king -  
had taken his pleasure,  
she slipped out  
she escaped  
with her child on her back  
a rifle on her shoulder  
leaving a piece of glass heel  
in the throat of the king.

Recently here in Iowa City, a Free Medical Clinic was set up. It was mainly put together by a woman who is a social work graduate. Medical students, social work students, pharmacy and nursing students from the university all help staff the clinic. Also there are several doctors, a licensed pharmacist and a nurse there.

I was introduced to the clinic when I went one evening with four other women. Three wanted to see doctors and the other two of us went to support them. We ended up spending the entire evening there and it turned out to be a real far out experience.

Personally, I am scared to death of doctors. Until I was 18 I had a woman pediatrician and at that time I was tossed out to fend for myself at the university student health. Believe me, they were not anything like the woman doctor I'd always had. She had explained things to me, showed me how to insert a tampon and generally made me not ashamed to come for physicals. I was used to going to her whenever I was sick and getting prompt medical treatment.

Then came four years of unlearning everything I'd learned about doctors as a child. At student health they couldn't even give you a physical. To have a physical I would have to go to the hospital and spend at least \$50. Also, I soon learned that you don't go there until you're practically on your death bed. Otherwise, you're told that you're burning the candle at both ends and what you really need is to go home, sleep, and stop your outside school activities. Sometimes when I came in to make sure I didn't have strep throat I'd have to ask several times before they'd take a throat culture. Then came my most humiliating experience with student health. As traumas started pouring in on me I couldn't sleep, was nauseated, felt dizzy, had headaches and was a general mess. After so much I finally got up the nerve to go over to student health only to be told it was all in my head. I had my days and nights mixed up "young lady," and I would have to cut out my outside activities. Of course, I received nothing to help calm me down, and I went away furious and totally intimidated.

With this background the next Friday my friends convinced me to go to the Free Clinic and get some medications. I was really scared to death about what I was going to say when the doctor asked me why I needed tranquilizers. I didn't want to tell him my life story, and I knew he could easily convince me that I wasn't really bad enough to need meds. Like the Friday before, we all went together and my sisters

sat there with me while he asked me questions. I was still scared, but I knew my sisters were there and would help me.

As it happened I think the doctor was intimidated by so many of us to support each other. He just wasn't used to five women coming and staying with each other. He was an ok doctor and didn't hassle me in the least about the way I was feeling. He gave me a prescription and told me to come back in two weeks so he could talk with me again to see how things were.

I imagine we'll spend a lot of time in the future at the Free Clinic. This summer I may even work there. I hope that our example of coming together, supporting each other, and supporting women we meet at the clinic encourages other women to come together.

It is yet to be seen how the clinic will turn out. There are several really concerned people working there. However, the clinic is mainly staffed by medical students as always on ego trips and into the doctor thing. This is always a bummer. Also, an ad hoc committee has been formed with five medical people and seven people from the community. We have yet to see what they will do also.

#### WHERE ARE YOU ELIZABETH?

Two weeks ago Friday from 7:30 to 11, five of us women spent a delightful and reassuring evening at the Free Medical Clinic above the River City Non-Free Trade Zone. I say delightful because there wasn't a big frosty-glassed door to walk through with a buzzer to announce our entrance, or piped in music which nobody listens to anyway, and no gigantic pile of magazines which everyone thumbs through but really doesn't read. The first thing you see is a small-tall table with a file on one end under a bed-stand type lamp with a very nice woman passing out information sheets. (Not life history, name, birth, etc.) There were plenty of fold-out chairs and benches for people to sit on and no one had to stand for very long. There weren't very many small children, but there were stuffed toys and people to play with. A short while later another woman came around and asked about previous medication and allergic reactions to certain drugs. Everyone's temperature & blood-pressure was taken in one corner of the waiting area. There is a big room in back where people not requiring physical exams may talk with the examiner or talk to them before a physical examination.

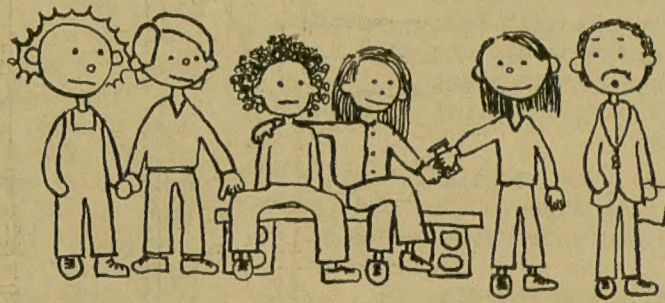
There are also free birth control handbooks, pap-smears, and equipment to test for VD.

Since the space for private physical examinations is limited, one might have to wait a little while and this is where the reassuring part comes in. We decided that none of us would talk to or be examined by anyone alone. If two of us were called at once, one would wait and accompany the other. Two of us went who didn't need to be examined at this particular time but it was very reassuring to know that when we did it wouldn't be alone. Tensions often mount when you don't know what to expect or know your body is going to be examined by someone you don't know. Not being alone and having someone who knows and cares about you is so important during these times. Take a friend with you and take them in with you. It was a good feeling to know we'd helped each other and we'd grown a little closer because of it. Sisterhood IS Powerful!

The only thing that bothered me was the seemingly over abundant supply of medical students, (male) with female nursing students to assist them. Where are the Elizabeth Blackwells of the 70's?

Looking back on the evening I felt particularly glad that I didn't have to be examined. I didn't think this attitude of "what's O.K. for you might not be for me" was fair at all. I thought about it quite a while and tried to decide exactly what would have made me feel more secure there and decided I would have had no objection to being examined by a woman, either medical student, nurse, or any woman that could have helped me. I realize the problems involved in setting up an all women medical clinic, and I think the Free Medical Clinic is a fantastic move, BUT I also know that there are women medical students, nurses, social workers, all women that know much more than they are given credit for or allowed to do by written or unwritten law. There is no reason, in my opinion, to set up a duplicate hierarchy in a free medical clinic that already exists in the medical profession today. Surely there can be more ingenuity, creativity, and human awareness in a free medical clinic than a hospital or like institution. There are people struggling to keep the clinic from turning into a toy hospital and they need our support! Help keep the clinic free and ask to see a WOMAN! WHERE ARE YOU ELIZABETH?

# The Doctor is in.



I decided that my nervousness and depression had reached its peak but was afraid to go to the free clinic. Whenever I really lose control I'm terrified of being committed. I've been through that psychiatry scene before and it's for shit. I finally expressed this to some of the women I live with although I felt ridiculously paranoid. They were wonderful and went to the clinic with me and supported me. The clinic was a real high. I didn't have to face a med student or doctor alone. Someone always stayed with me. The doctor I saw did suggest I see a counselor but when I refused he didn't push it. I felt I was listened to and that what I said was accepted as valid. I received some pills free. It was like a fantasy -- being treated respectfully and for free.

Sometimes I enjoy work when I can pretend it's after the revolution and what we're producing is what will meet people's needs and that all of us on the assembly line had an equal say in what we did and how. The clinic was like that the first night and just the experience of decent care and support from other women made me feel much better. But just as I must come to and see what I'm helping produce on that line is worthless shit that no one needs but will make a profit for someone and pay me a minimum wage, I came to the clinic the next week and saw how nothing is free and the med students and doctors had no intention of treating us on any other than their own terms.

One of us went to get her prescription for a mild tranquilizer refilled. This time she was really pressured about seeing a counselor and some of us intervened to explain the real material

conditions that were upsetting us all and now we could talk to each other about them but we had no power to change them and neither did any fuckin counselor. After that we were told in effect that we could not get prescriptions if we continued to come to the clinic together. We would each have to see a doctor alone. Our support of each other was a threat to the unchallenged power of the doctor. It seemed like we could continue to get help there but only by allowing ourselves to be intimidated by seeing a doctor alone or possibly seeing a counselor we didn't want to see.

Medical students and doctors are not generally poor (to say the least) and seem freaked out by how many people have come to them for some kind of tranquilizer. They don't understand how natural that is -- that people without money are as nervous about poverty as those who can afford to go to a private physician, that people are freaked out over having no homes or no jobs or jobs they're constantly afraid of losing. How the hell they think going to some damn counselor once a week to tell him you're pretty upset living in this shit pile, that being a woman in this world is hard, that being poor in America is rough, that being a radical woman in America can mean your extinction kinda scares you sometimes, that being gay in a straight world takes courage you don't always have --- how they think that's gonna change things for you, I don't know. But then they don't have to think very hard. They're men, they're privileged, they're Gods.

Anyway I wouldn't go to the free clinic expecting better care. It's the same shit, you just don't have to lay any cash down. But not having to pay is not the entire meaning of free.

This D  
No C  
People f

We voted to stay. Lots of tension as we phoned for supporters and began to realize that a bust was probable. We hadn't planned on this. The University people left for parts unknown, after addressing us to make it "perfectly clear" that they didn't like what we were up to.

It took five days to settle the matter for the time being. The University has probably never done anything so fast. Dum-Dum got a temporary facility, a former faculty house which needs lots of repairing. Rent: \$37.50, but we can rent out an upstairs room to cover most of the cost. Some of the fix-up materials are going to cost us, some they're paying for. The next three faculty houses open are



going to day care. We will have one, another goes to a different co-op that must also move, and the third is left for a new co-op. Rent at these houses will be \$75. The rent will be covered by letting out the upstairs as an apartment--these houses are huge. The settlement is not ideal, but for most of us it seemed worth the effort. One more very small step in a very long stairway.

6. dum dum daycare dum dum daycare dum dum daycare dum dum daycare dum dum daycare dum

This is DumDum  
Day Care Center  
No Crashing or Loafing  
People with Work + Love  
for children Welcome

April 20, 1971

Dear Anna,

So much has happened. I must say I didn't think of you or the family when I decided to state my feelings publicly by allowing myself to be arrested.

At the beginning of that morning I had no awareness the day would end in jail, but then three months ago I had small awareness of my, and all women's oppressed position in this society. Back a time span of six months I still hoped day care was not a political issue.

So much more pleasant, more tidy to just mind your own business--get your own head together and avoid those who are down on you. Well, I guess day care was what radicalized me. Daycare and its relation to women's place and rights in society.

I began to be vaguely aware back in September when a court injunction was served against Dum-Dum. It listed incredibly rigorous requirements for child care for those over the age of 2 (which Dum-Dum couldn't meet) and stated since no standards existed for children under two, all Dum-Dum operations were "automatically" illegal.

It was an impressive document. But the vote was that Dum-Dum continue. For many in the group, there was no choice. Women with low-paying eight-to-five jobs couldn't afford commercial child care, and besides disliked all it taught and stood for.

Dum-Dum is a free, cooperative attempt to provide a service members feel every woman deserves. Without paying high costs or turning her child over to unsympathetic persons, a woman can give some time and energy to herself. She can regain her integrity as a person in her own right--no longer an essential but non-valued servant, tending never-ending demands of husband and children.

The mother in the family, traditionally the most burdened, can give one day a week to a group of children and have her child cared for by other parents the rest of the week. For harried women never given a chance to go out unencumbered by children--or guilt about where they've been left--the day care opens a new life.

But the benefits of communal child care are two-fold. For in free collective child care the relationship between mother and child may change for the better as the woman comes to perceive her children as small human beings and less as accidents with baggage on her life.

The children benefit, too. Few low-income women charged with running a household have time or energy to devote just to playing with and physically expressing love for their children.

Toddlers and infants, especially when closely spaced, may receive little adult attention.

The day care is created to stimulate and amuse a child. It is a child's world and adults who enter are expected to be willing to devote 100% of their energies to meeting their needs.

Emphasis is placed on sharing. A serious attempt is made to avoid perpetuating the blights of the larger society. Racism and sexism, all kinds of exploitation are blatant in America. Parent-run day care centers can fight these more effectively than a single woman or a family. Each child is loved and cared for by all the adults in the community. The children are not "property" of a woman or a family. The child learns to know a variety of people, learns to trust and love many more children and adults than could otherwise be possible.

I believe day care centers are a positive good. I am glad to see women's lives and faces thaw and become alive. I am assured to see children, once distrusting and resentful, become open and sharing with their "sisters" and "brothers".

All the day care center requires in material goods is a place to set up facilities. Warmth, a kitchen, a toilet--these are essential. When Dum-Dum was in St. Paul's, it occupied a basement. Not very elegant, but adequate for winter. But in springtime the rains came, and the basement flooded. Soon-due rains plus more state hassles concerning fire regulations made it clear to Dum-Dum workers a new facility was needed.

There was no church willing and the financial status of the group precluded any other possibilities.

Members of Dum-Dum were aware of the need for a better place back in the fall of 1970, when requests and inquiries were made to the university officials in charge of space. Some of the most patient and sincere started the long process of "going through

proper channels" to get university assistance.

They met with all manner of resistance and evasion; attempts were made to "buy them off" with the university's version of what child care was about.

For the space office somehow "lost" the requests. Meetings were proposed, and then the U. spokesmen didn't show. Or the bureaucratic wheels would grind down on some failure on their part--to have information, to have authority to act... on and on. Round and round--anything to avoid setting the precedent of recognizing what the daycare people were talking about. There seemed little hope of their actually granting housing.

No one wanted a university supervised and run facility, at \$50 per child per month, designed to educate "liberal" social workers.

And no one wanted the children to be experimental guinea pigs in a testing situation which the group as a whole had come to distrust. And this elaborate and expensive ordeal could care for only 12 children--nowhere near the number needing it or who could be helped if help were given or asked for.

And so a decision was made to start acting for ourselves. The university owns houses and properties all through the town. Some are unused, some poorly used, but all clearly marked "university property." And with that tag comes the societal structure of whose needs get attention.

Obviously, day care wasn't one of them. And both sides knew that. It didn't matter a damn to them that our children were in a mildewed, sunless basement--they weren't suffering. The more time stalled, the better it suited them. But our needs had only grown more intense in the long bicker and debate period. It was clear they didn't care for us and they didn't care to act in our behalf.

So we stopped asking. We found unused and poorly used space and made plans. And on the morning of Easter Sunday we acted. We set up our daycare in the Foreign Language House. We moved the plastic chairs and rugs to the side. We moved the unused books and magazines and old drama props out of the back room. We put food in the working but empty refrigerator and put children's lunch supplies on the clean but bare shelves.

We set cribs up in the back room and put out playpens and toy-boxes in the front room. Children were happy as essential items of child care were put in place and toys discovered. Everyone was pleased at the spaciousness and beauty of the house.

Our investigations had indicated the house was used a few nights a week as a social center for foreign-language students. That minimal use of the house could certainly continue--we were not attempting to put them out. But if they were miffed, the university could easily find them another unused kitchen, a room with plastic chairs. Rumor had it they preferred the union anyway.

No one had expected the big boys of the university to come out on Sunday to give us a bad time. Their story was predictable.

No one wanted to hear it anymore. Everyone was sick of their liberal mouthings and Dean Hubbard was dubbed "the two-faced con man". They bullied and pleaded and threatened and we talked to them and then among ourselves. Everyone was aware how important this was. Feelings ran high. We had found our new daycare and damnit, we were going to stay!

Not so, ordained the vice provost. And he did freak out. Four police cars parked in back of the house. Ten or twelve policemen assembled.

The group inside met for a most earnest discussion. In one day we had come so far--been so bold. We had acted on our beliefs and now they would like to shoo us all out, and smooth everything over and help everyone forget that we had ever acted. But we couldn't do that.

(I can record only my personal thoughts from this point on. I do not know to what extent I am representative of the 17.) I felt I had to make known just how earnestly I felt about the need for monied and established institutions to recognize the importance of day care and extend a portion of their vast resources. I felt I had to act for all the women who are caught in existing social patterns with no awareness of alternatives.

I felt within the group a feeling of strength and solidarity of those forced to oppose a tradition they believe is unjust. My head buzzed but I realized with ever-increasing clarity that there was a time and a place to take a public stand and when that time came, I would act.

They arrested the men first, then led out the women. All but me--I couldn't/wouldn't walk out so sweetly. I was mad down to my bones and I felt they could not make me leave. When they took the woman closest (a Yeast Cell sister), I felt my knees sink to the floor and I stared, cold, at the head of campus security. The remaining policemen looked very much as though they would have liked to leave me there, but Saylor called sharply to them and said, "You! I want you to get this one! Here!" Most hesitantly they put their hands on me. Donna D, my sister, called back "Think heavy! Theresa." and I grinned a heavy grin as she went out the door.

They nearly dropped me on the step but I felt only a curious, almost cold hatred, comprehending anew the meaning and purpose of civil disobedience.

Now it's a week and a half later. My trial is the 30th; the charge disorderly conduct. If they find me guilty the fine is \$100.

But the flip side is brighter. Within five days of our arrest the University located a house for our use. Within one week a contract had been signed, for a rent almost within our range.

The whole involvement has taught me a number of things about myself. I realize I never could have come to this point--the point of having these beliefs and being willing to act on them--without the love and support of my sisters in the Yeast Cell. The opportunity for any woman who wishes to enter a free day care must be provided. A woman's place in this society is restricted and enforced by keeping her within the confines of the nuclear family. In it, she is isolated from her similarly oppressed sisters. She gives her labor like a servant and is treated like a child by the man and by the society she lives in.

Much love to my sisters. May our dreams and our children's dreams live forever.

no daycare dum dum daycare dum dum daycare dum dum daycare dum dum 7.

Most of the experiences we had during the five days from the takeover of the Modern Language House to the University's granting of a house for the day care center are ones most of my sisters and I had never had before: being arrested and jailed, and the "shadowing" action we did on the Vice-Provost. But because of the support of my sisters (in addition to some very specific middle-class privileges we all shared) jail did not intimidate us and university officials could not coopt our efforts.

My first sharp vision of things to come, both with regard to (1) our really being jailed and (2) the role that sisterhood would take in all that, appeared while we were still in the Language House. One of my sisters—who works in the same cell as five of us who were later arrested—came to us and hugged us with tears in her eyes and said she had to go before the police came. Her hassles with an extremely sexist and politically conservative boss are acute; and we all knew how desperately she needs to keep her job to support all three people in her family. I was pretty anxious myself when, a few minutes later, I was put alone in a police car. Then two of my sisters joined me, and the intimidation of that moment was gone. We went to the station with our arms around each other and smiling in our secret strength. The same thing happened later as we were taken to the jail cell. At first, I was the only one in the cell: moments of fright (they'd already started hassling us, and I knew an uncomfortable amount about the deliberate dehumanization that occurs in the "total institution"); then the sisters were brought in a few at a time until—a rush of relief—we were, all eight of us, together.

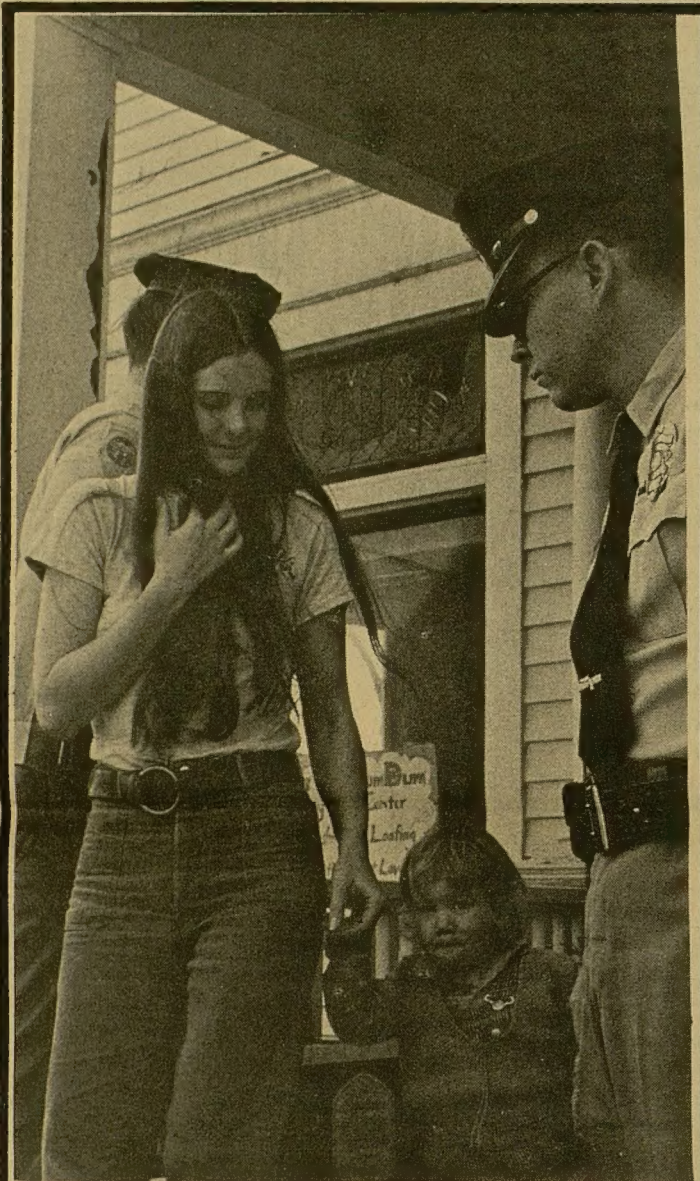
We were feeling good—given the circumstances. The facilities available for women (one 9 x 12 room in the whole county jail and that without any fire escape) were awful compared to the men's (which are nine times that size, include books, t.v., walking space). But still our morale was fantastically high. Pictures of Dum Dum children and of each of us were being drawn on the walls and one sister had just finished lettering Sisterhood is Powerful with a pen they hadn't taken away from us, when one matron came in and told us with a self-satisfied air that we'd have to wash off anything we wrote before we left. When we could no longer hear her steps going down the stairs, one quiet voice said, "Then we'll just have to carve it in." And we did. In the course of our stay there we sang and learned to ululate (like the women in Algeria). These things,

along with frequent notes and indications of support from our friends outside, made us feel pretty much on top of it all.

But Sunday night, unexpectedly, one of us was bonded out. Then another and another. We'd known that we'd be gotten out eventually, but we hadn't expected to be taken away little by little. The women bonded out didn't want to leave and those of us remaining felt the threat to our morale: our physical unity was important to our strength. It was then that we decided that the last two or three people would refuse to be bailed out separately. No one was to be left alone in that place, without a sister for support. The next woman to leave gave those instructions to the bailiff.

#### On Being Middle-Class

Certainly some of our confidence was based on our middle-class privileges and not on our sisterhood. We knew bail money for us would come from somewhere. We were, thanks to other middle-class advantages,



not long term prisoners. Our healthy rebellion against the way people are treated in jails made us say over and over again that there should be no jails at all. We know, too, that because we are middle class (or offspring of middle class people) we are unaccustomed to being handled in an authoritarian, shut-up-I'm-in-charge-here-and-don't-you-forget-it-manner, and we have the anger and strength to fight against it: the deputy's hassling one of us by accusing her of being a junkie (and then acting as if he were doing it out of "concern" for her); the matron's calling one of the sisters names for things she's alleged to have written about that jail; the continual references to people as "prisoners"; the repeated, explicit statements that everything we wanted depended on our jailors and their ever-changing whims (number of phone calls, time of the one you had a right to, and whether or not you got your flu or virus medication (two of the 17 were sick when jailed)).

Curiously enough, our being middle-class and female (it didn't happen to the men) made us the victims of a weird kind of double-bind that the matrons kept putting us through. They would come in and sit down with us and act as if they were at a tea-party in someone's living room, and then hit us with a not-very-well-disguised-put-down: "Have fun, girls!" (heh, heh.); and a long rap on 'how I think day care is fine, but your tactics...'

One last thing on being middle class.

Later in the week, after we were out and one of my sisters and I were "shadowing" the Vice-Provost (lest he forget our urgent need for a daycare center), we had to follow him to the conference rooms of a fat-cat hotel in town where he was having a meeting. My sister and I were standing there in our jeans and jackets and looking really "out of place." In the course of our waiting we saw a number of people who were also coming to that meeting. In fact, I saw two with whom I used to go to those very meetings. I don't know whether to call living in that conference room culture a middle class disadvantage or what. Or maybe the way I felt there in my jeans was the advantage a 'radical' has over a 'liberal' (if any of these categories exist in reality). But I felt so good, like laughing to myself. Repeatedly, the Vice-Provost, in an attempt to be 'nice' (read cooptive?) asked my sister and me to come inside and sit down with them, where we'd be, in his words "More comfortable." He will never realize with what a sense of the truth that I replied, "No, thank you, we're more comfortable here."

I have volunteered at Dum Dum for almost a year now although I have never been involved in the planning or decision making process. I didn't feel I had that kind of energy because of the time I put in working on AIAW. I also knew that I have very ambivalent feelings about community organizing and knew that I did not choose to work with men. I therefore did not attend the weekly cooperative meetings.

I heard about the building take over hours after it had occurred. I did know that people were thinking about doing it but nothing had been definite. It upset me that my living collective was called after the action had already taken place and asked to support it. I'm not sure just how much of my upset was due to not having been informed before hand since I had put in as much time at Dum Dum as most of those who participated in the action or how much was due to the fact that I live in a women's collective and women I live with were involved. Two women living in the collective were among those arrested.

Living in a collective like ours you are affected by every thing anyone in the house does and I guess I think we should inform one another about anything that is going to seriously disrupt that house. The phone in our house did not stop ringing until two or three in the morning with either questions about what happened and what people could do (which I didn't know) or requests of us to call people, organize support for the action etc. Many of the requests I couldn't fulfill because I had to work that week. Many of the requests I wouldn't do under any circumstances. I have felt pretty burned out from a year of political work and tensions, and pretty freaked out about my economic situation so I was in all around bad mental shape and the tensions of that day, of feeling that I had a responsibility to relate to something that I had not had any say in nor had I been informed of, really did me in.

Several of us went down to the building after we heard about

the take over. We arrived in time to see people arrested and to retrieve the children of arrested parents. The scene was so familiar it was almost boring. Everyone acted out there established roles - the people making a simple request, taking a building that they had a right to have; the university having all the power and owning the building. So the university administrators got out their police and had those who chose to remain in the building removed and arrested. Sweet and simple; expected and despicable. Expected because anything people do to help themselves and each other is bound to be against the law in this country and yet no matter how many times I see the same scene that raw display of how the cards are stacked in this capitalist society will always be despicable to me.

I am working at a temporary job on a factory line, the first work I've had since September. Our living collective was broke and had many bills which we couldn't pay. If I had gotten arrested I could not have paid back anyone who would have bailed me out and the people closest to me who would have somehow gotten the bail together could not really afford it. The Dum Dum action cost \$1700 in bail money and times are hard. That some how seems like a blaring contradiction to me.

While I watched people being taken from the building and kept track of the probable bail, I thought how dumb middle-class people were. They were paying more for that one day action than they will now pay for a years rent. All my life I thought middle class people had something - some quality that I wanted. They have money and a secure background of having money so that allows them to be dumber than me. It allows them to go to jail being sure that they'll be out in a day. Their experience is so different from that of most people who have gone to jail or remain there awaiting trial. I don't know what is correct political strategy in a time of depression but I think that is a question women should be addressing now.

2. dum dum daycare dum dum daycare dum dum daycare dum dum daycare

it's like double vision  
seeing double is a trick

like the way my mind  
monitors  
everything i do:  
now i'm dialing the number  
now i'm seeing the image  
of me dialing the number  
this goes on  
as i'm writing it down  
& even seeing the image  
of me a writer

like double vision  
seeing double is a trick  
there's the real me  
do the real thing  
& simultaneously  
& not far away  
here i am watching  
myself  
& only one scene  
is real  
& the other is  
an image  
& seeing double is a trick

is there some way not to go  
through all these things twice

only one scene  
is real  
pick your image  
you have to trust  
your judgement

you have to live in your world

can y see both sides  
can y believe one  
is closer to you

one coming into focus  
one fading  
it's like double vision  
seeing double is a trick  
be tricky or be tricked

coming into focus  
i meet your eyes  
women arise.

On The Subway N.Y.

is there a grownup way  
to say it  
what's up there  
over my head  
how long till  
there's a bathroom  
is it ok for me  
to hold your hand  
funny noise  
made me think of  
something i don't  
know the name of  
the city again  
makes me feel like  
a little child again  
with everything  
two feet above my head  
like a child  
but not the child i  
grew up as  
running in green space  
trees ballgames +  
a one floor school  
where i got A's  
not that but the  
child i felt like  
sitting in a tenement  
window solitary  
huddled part of neither  
the outside scene  
nor the inside warmth  
the child no one saw  
i was  
the child i feel is still me

Pissed Off Poem

"...You probably didn't think I did  
But I heard  
You say that love is just  
a four-letter word.."

and I heard you say it  
oh, not like so  
but I heard your  
opinion  
of me as  
those people  
and you couldn't even make  
any other kind of noise,  
boys.

# two women speak from Niantic prison

reprinted from LNS

(Editor's note: I met Pam and Marsha in the livingroom of a woman who works for the people's bail fund in New Haven. When I first saw them, they were writing letters to Ericka Huggins. We were all going to Ericka's trial the next day.

Pam, 20, and Marsha, 24, were arrested together in New Britain, Conn. one night in January, handcuffed in a parking lot, and charged with violent robbery and conspiracy to rob. Strung out on heroin, they were brought before a judge who sent them to Niantic State Farm, a women's prison in Connecticut, to go through withdrawal. After a hearing, they spent three months in Niantic, where they met Ericka.

Pam, who is white, and Marsha, who is black, grew up together on the streets of New Britain. Pam began taking heroin at the age of 14. Becoming "partners in crime" to support their habit, they robbed the men who bought their bodies on the street.

Marsha has an eight year old daughter, and Pam is four months pregnant. They each face 15 years in prison if convicted. Until their trial next month, they will be trying to organize a bail fund in New Britain.

They told me, "If we have to do time at Niantic, we're ready.")



MARSHA: We arrived at Niantic State Farm at 4:30 in the afternoon. We were taken to the admission room where they took fingerprints of us, took our picture, and a nurse checked us out. We had to sign a paper about state property. They give us five dresses, five bras, five pairs of underpants. We were warned not to destroy their property. We hand over our money, our rings, our jewelry, and they say they aren't responsible, but we're supposed to be responsible for the shit they give us, you dig it?

The nurse told me 'You're sick, I'm going to let you go upstairs. I'm not going to send you to the infirmary. You have to be quiet. If you raise too much noise when you're kicking, they'll put you in the dungeon.' She said 'You'll get medicine.'

I didn't get anything except two aspirin every four hours. We had to stay locked in a room for 60 hours, in isolation. They give you Look magazines to read and a puzzle to do.

You go through withdrawal alone. It took me about a month and a half to get to sleep. They give you no methadone, no pills, no anything to kick with. You have pains in your stomach, you have cramps in your legs, you have diarrhea, you vomit, you have headaches, your throat is swollen, your tongue is swollen. There is no relief whatsoever.

And if you lie on the floor -- the floor's cold, you try to lie on the floor to get a little relief -- they tell you, 'If I catch you laying on the floor again, I'm going to lock you up for extra days.' You can't sleep, so when you toss and turn, your sheets fall off the bed. When they find your sheets off the bed, they lock you up for extra days.

PAM: A few weeks later, about ten sisters got locked up for singing "Power to the People." It seems funny now but it really blew our minds at the time. We were singing in the dining room, and some of the sisters were drawing and writing. We had a magic marker that belonged to a matron. One of the matrons came down to the dining room for the magic marker.

'I want the magic marker,' she said. And we wouldn't give it up. We passed it around the whole room, all the sisters were passing it around. Finally we were told we could have no lunch until they got the magic marker.

I thought there was going to be a riot that day. We started singing "Power to the People." Ericka came downstairs, she was crying. She told us, 'Do you think it's fair for some of the sisters to get involved when they aren't involved?' You know, 'because some of them aren't ready for it yet.' And so we gave the magic marker up.

They called us down to the office, about ten of us, and we were told we had to be locked in our rooms for singing "Power to the People." We started banging on the doors. They brought guards over. I don't know what the guards were going to do, but they brought them over.

When the matrons brought our lunch up, we refused to eat. They opened the door and said, 'Do you want your lunch?' We said no. They got real nervous about it. 'Oh, you're refusing your lunch? You're rejecting your lunch?' And they kept asking us. So we finally told them, 'Just get the fucking tray out of here, we don't want it.'

Then, all the sisters were really thinking about why we got locked. They started banging on the doors, all started banging on the doors. The matron was up there all the time, she's real sneaky about it, walking around on her tiptoes and everything. She says, 'Well, if you don't quiet down, you won't be coming out of your room tomorrow morning.' So everybody did quiet down.

A couple hours later she came by with papers ordering us to appear before the discipline board. They're papers but we call them warrants, because it's like getting arrested. She slipped it under my door and I saw it: 'You are charged with POWER TO THE PEOPLE: SONG, SUNG.'

We cracked up. We threw them back out in the hallway.

This was really when we started to get to know Ericka. She really talked to us, we listened. She's so strong and full of love. Ericka knew where we were coming from, why we were singing "Power to the People." She would come by our room every night and tell us, 'Be strong.'

We were locked in our rooms for about five days. While we were there facing the discipline board, we got messages from all over Niantic, saying 'Be strong.' Lonnie (McLucas) sent us a message. Bobby (Seale) sent us a message. Even a brother on Death Row in New Jersey sent us a message, saying 'Be strong. Keep up the struggle.' He's on death row and he's telling us to be strong?

When I finally went before the discipline board, they said, 'Do you plead guilty or not guilty?' I told them, 'I don't plead nothing until my lawyer's here.' They looked at each other and said, 'You go into your room and stay there until you decide to talk.' I said right on, and I went to my room.

So then Marsha went down, she told them the same thing. Another Sister, Sylvia, and Milly, all the sisters locked in their rooms told them, 'We don't plead anything until our lawyers are here.'

The next day, they took us out of our room real quick, down in front of the Board. They had the nerve to say, 'Well, since you won't put in your plea, we'll put it in for you. You're found guilty.'

Then they said, 'You girls can come out of your rooms now, do you have anything to say?' They were waiting for us to say thank you. We just walked on out. We were really ready for our rooms. A lot of sisters think they really got it made when they can walk around the building. Big deal, you see the same thing. The doors are locked, the windows are locked, so there's nothing to lose staying in your room.

As days went by, they thought they were really fucking our minds, but they were making us stronger. The more they said to us, the stronger we got. The more they locked us, the stronger we got.

Other sisters came in, we started getting them together, we started a Sisterlove Collective. That's what we called it. See, a lot of sisters don't have money, a lot of sisters don't have people. Some of us do. So we put all our money together. Nobody has what they call their money, it's our money.

MARSHA: When we got the money together, we'd go around and ask the sisters if they'd like lotion, or hair grease, or an afro-comb. Candy and cookies we'd share with everybody. It was all the sisters sharing, and the matrons didn't like that.

But whatever they like is not good for us. And whatever they don't like, that's what is good for us.

I remember the first day I met Ericka. I came out of isolation, and went to the dining room. There was a seat vacant near Ericka, and she told me, 'Sister, come sit over here.' There were some other sisters sitting at the table, and they asked me what I got charged for, and I told them. They asked me did I have a lawyer, and I told them no. They asked me did I have a family that had a car, and I told them no. A few days later, somebody drove my family up to see me.

There's no medical care whatsoever for the inmates at Niantic. If you're sick, you tell the matron, 'I'm sick, I want to see the doctor.' You have to wait at least two weeks before you can see a doctor.

You go in there, they don't have any kind of real cleanser for the bathroom or toilet, no disinfectants. Nothing to really clean the toilets with. A lot of girls pick up diseases. Especially after they kick.

There was a crabs epidemic while we were there. One girl came in with the crabs, and the matron said, 'Well, I'll tell you. You shower in the right-hand stall, and the girls that don't have the crabs will shower in the left-hand stall.' Now what kind of shit is that?

I came down with an infection after I kicked, and I didn't see a doctor till at least three weeks after I reported it. You have to tell them what's wrong with you. They have one baby doctor and he doesn't even know what he's doing. They have a psychiatrist you can go see, who will ask you what's wrong with you, and you tell him you can't sleep or that you want medication, and he'll say what kind of medication, and you'll tell him you want medication so you can sleep, and he orders you sleeping pills. So you walk around fucked up.

PAM: Drug addicts are really intelligent people, they really are. They haven't read all about life in books, they've experienced it. And when a drug addict comes out of their nod, and starts facing reality, where it's really at, then society has to watch out. Because once they get their heads together, nothing can really beat them.

The psychiatrist loves to give you medication, because then you can walk around and not know what's happening. We'd rather not sleep, cause we want to know what's happening. We found out. It was hard, it was a real struggle there, and you have to be strong. But when you get out in the streets, that's where you really face the struggle.

MARSHA: The clothes. They give you short-sleeve cotton dresses to wear all-year-round. Sometimes they don't heat the building. You'll be freezing, and all you got is that little fucking cotton dress.

PAM: See, the physical things they do to you, you can take. We can wear cotton dresses in the winter. But the things they do to your head, some sisters just can't take it. You know a lot of sisters come in fucked up from Jump Street, I know I was, and some of them sit down and think, 'Well, I'm just going to do my time and get out of here.' If everybody thought 'Well, let me do my time and get out of here,' then nothing's going to be changed. And that is why the matrons hated us, because we believed in change. They're so brainwashed that they can't believe in anything else except what the United States taught them.

There's another so-called problem they say they have. The sisters don't have it, but the matrons do. Homosexuality seems to be a big problem to them, a problem to what we call Front Street, the 'higher ups.' They don't want any 'Lesbians' on their Farm, they say.

We don't relate to homosexuality either. Because when you love somebody, you love them. You don't have to call it 'homosexuality,' you don't have to call it 'the gay life,' or 'bull dagger' or any of those terms the pigs use. Love is just love, whether it's a sister or a brother, it doesn't matter.

The staff members up there, their minds are really fucked up about it. One day, there was a little announcement made in the dining room. 'After you eat, if you want to sit here you have to

sit at three tables, where the matrons can see you.' We knew why they wanted to watch us, because they're thinking, 'A couple of sisters are going to be getting down in the dining room.'

We confronted the head supervisor of the hall. She says, 'Well, you know, you girls do things in the bathroom.' I really wish she would have said it to me, because I would have told her, 'Yeah, I shit, and I piss in the bathroom.'

Some sisters really do have a problem with so-called homosexuality because they are brainwashed, and it's not their fault. They think: 'If I'm going to hook up with one of the sisters, well I'm going to be the fucking boss. You sit here and I'll sit there.' See, we don't believe in that -- that makes it ugly. The matrons like that -- when they see two sisters really hooked up with one having to play the man role, one having to play the woman role.

We're trying to get away from those roles anyway. A lot of sisters want to play the man role because they've been fucked around by men for so long. Now it's their turn, they want to fuck someone else around.

So now we've told you some things about Niantic, just a little bit of what happens down there, and there's a lot that really has to be done. It's going to take sisters like Ericka, it's going to take sisters like us, to do it. It's really a fucking drag that sisters have to go to a prison to get it together.

Today we went to Ericka's trial. When I saw her, it was just unbelievable. I couldn't believe it was her. You really have to meet her. A lot of people are afraid of her. They put her on a pedestal, they make her an idol. She really hates it. Because Ericka is just Ericka.

She had a big smile on her face. Walked in just as strong as she is, you know. When we saw her Marsha and I started crying. And she said, 'Wipe away the tears. Be strong.' So I wiped away the tears. We were leaving the courtroom because there was no session today, one of the jurors was sick. She yelled 'I love you,' and we said, 'Well, we love you too Ericka.'

And the pig that was so-called escorting us out of the courtroom said, 'Hurry up, clear the courtroom.' We said, 'Yeah, we'll clear it. We love you, Ericka,' and walked out.

\* \* \*

Write to Ericka, c/o Catherine Roraback, 265 Church St.,  
New Haven, Connecticut 06511.

## Thoughts to keep in mind as we find out more about ourselves....

There are so many temptations that face us as we struggle to free ourselves. We sometimes take a leave of absence from the world--from the battleground which has hurt, tormented and sometimes deeply scarred and crippled us. In that leave-taking, we often forget one of the most basic truths that the Movement has brought out...that whatever hang-ups we have, whatever personality problems that destroy our ability to relate creatively and inhibit our growth--these are not mere idiosyncratic responses--our own private neurosis...and they just don't stem from what happened in our early childhood, in our families...all these things have real roots in the society in which we live...in its values...its institutions...its dynamics. We developed patterns of relating for very good reasons.

But as we find ourselves in relationships with women, we realize that we have to relate different ways. Many of us (particularly because of the various descriptions which appeared in different papers) expected a garden of eden as we moved from heterosexual to lesbian relationships. We thought that once we could relate to women everything would be fine. But we have learned that altho the shit in us may have been a response to the destructiveness of the world around us, we are still carrying it around with us. We bring along to our lesbian relationships many years of feelings, defenses, insecurities from that other world and it is hard to change oneself and even harder to be understanding and be sympathetic to a sister who reacts in ways which anger, displease, or hurt us.

Many of us have felt intensely inhibited physically...have moved awkwardly all of our lives...never really felt together with our bodies...found it hard to move--to dance--to express whatever sensuality and sexuality we felt living inside of us. But, the world has taught us well, and has had many years to play with our reactions and values. We have been taught by experience and/or moved and expressed ourselves physically...for (as we have been so dutifully taught) if we did let out that fluidity...the sen-

suality that is in all of us--we would be responsible for whatever happened...we would have to pay the debt created as men responded to whatever was released. Remember that whatever happens is always the woman's fault.

So all my life I went around feeling that inside me was a grateful dancer...a passionate sensual force which could never be expressed because it would be too dangerous. So from my earliest days I blotted out whatever grace I might have had and sought protection in no movement at all or in jerky awkwardness. Clodiness has enormous protective value and in my child's mind I think I sensed that safety and so I became uptight and inhibited...finally unable to move at all. At 30 I could barely move--until another woman took the time, energy and understanding to teach me to dance. I was 30 before I could let go and feel my body merge uncaringly with the music. I could not dance before because I did not know what reactions would come down on me. If a male should respond to me and I was not interested there was a sense of obligation there. After all I HAD behaved in a certain way...there were responsibilities...being called a cockteaser was a terrible insult...especially if you were even slightly 'liberated.'

I was even afraid of being openly warm and affectionate with people. In fact, once again it was from other women that I learned to be easy with demonstrations of affection. In my past (heterosexual life) to be openly warm and loving entailed climbing into bed--always the collected obligation...gestures had commitments, obligations and meanings beyond just the immediate expression of affection. I think I learned to be warm and easy with women because there was no collection demand. Women do not have penises which when erected have to be satisfied.

The belief that things that happen sexually are the woman's fault really does presuppose a certain view of male sexuality, presupposes the "myth" of the erected penis and its demand for explosion inside of your body...its demand for release.

Take a look at D.H. Lawrence, "Drawing

him to her so that her hanging swinging breasts touched the tip of the stirring erect phallus and caught the drop of moisture. She held him fast. 'Lie down!' he said. 'Lie down! Let me come!' He was in a hurry now." A little later in that same scene after he has come, she examines the wilted penis, "And he was helpless, as the penis in soft, slow undulations filled and surged and rose up, and grew hard standing there hard and overweening in its curious towering fashion. The woman too trembled a little as she watched. 'There! Take him then! He is thine!' said the man."

In all of this he never does anything with her body... he never explores it with her...everything that happens is a function of his erection...and we are taught to acknowledge, accept, and in fact seek the force and demand of that erection. We are taught the legitimacy and demand of his arousal...and that we are obligated if we are at all implicated in that penis' erecting...so naturally we learned to control all sorts of things...for we never knew when we would be implicated and forced by our training to accept our obligation.

It is not that we are cold and frigid in our responses to people. What we have to learn is that being with, loving, and sexually relating to women is an entirely different reality--a different situation and that old fears are not really relevant. Lesbian women know this...straight women don't. So many straight women get very uptight and threatened by Lesbians; they feel that they are now sexual objects for the whole human race...that the safety they had with women is gone because of Lesbianism. But stop just for a moment--that fear reveals more about the character of the heterosexual world--of women's role in that world--than anything else. And it is important for us--lesbians and non-lesbians to recognize what shaping effect that heterosexual--that male-dominated society has had on all of us. We cannot explain our reactions...our relationship to ourselves and our bodies and to each other without going back and understanding that world which has shaped us.

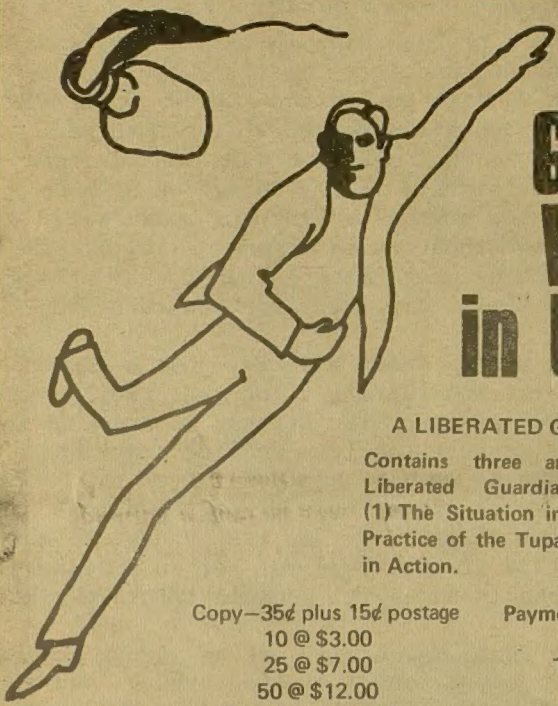
Reprinted from Spectrum, c/o Women's Liberation Office, 1510 S.B. U. of Michigan / Ann Arbor, Mich. 48104

a Woman?

April 30, 1971

11

# TUPAMAROS



## Urban Guerrilla Warfare in Uruguay

A LIBERATED GUARDIAN PAMPHLET

Contains three articles reprinted by the Liberated Guardian from Tricontinental: (1) The Situation in Uruguay, (2) Theory and Practice of the Tupamaros, (3) The Tupamaros in Action.

Copy—35¢ plus 15¢ postage

10 @ \$3.00

25 @ \$7.00

50 @ \$12.00

postage included

Payment must accompany orders:

Order from

The Liberated Guardian

14 Cooper Square

New York, N.Y. 10003

The Committee for Problem Pregnancies of Bloomington, Indiana is sponsoring a Midwest abortion counselling conference for women now doing abortion counselling. Its purpose is to develop organization - to consolidate information, to try and find better prices and better places for women to go.

Workshops planned are:

Sexuality

Special problems (women's parents)

Counselling techniques

Discussion with M.D. on saline method

Abortion law repeal

Discussion with psychiatrist who sees women who want abortions

The dates are May 7-9, beginning Friday at 8 pm. Day care and housing will be provided. The only fee is a small charge for lunches.

They'd like women who are going to notify them ahead of time.

Write: Dindy Reich

606 East Cottage Grove

Bloomington, Indiana 47401

Call: (812) 336-1333 (Martha or whoever answers)

SING OUT! magazine's new issue is devoted to songs of women: traditional ballads and songs of the women's movement throughout the world. Rip off or copy it at your favorite library or bookstore.

"That man over there say that a woman needs to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helped me into carriages, or over mud puddles, or gives me a best place... And ain't I a woman? Look at me. Look at my arm! I have plowed and planted and gathered into barns, and no man could head me... And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man when I could get it, and bear the lash as well... And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children and seen them most all sold off into slavery. And when I cried out with a mother's grief, none but Jesus heard... And ain't I a woman?"

Sojourner Truth: Speech before the Woman's Rights Convention at Akron, Ohio in 1851.

We are a collective of nine women functioning as a world wide conspiracy of Radical Lesbians.

Ain't I A Woman is published every three weeks by the Angry Independent Amazon Women P.O. Box 1169, Iowa City, Iowa 52240.

If your group wants to receive bundles of AIN'T I A WOMAN?, you can send 15¢ per copy (minimum bundle: 20 copies) in advance.

ain't i  
a  
woman

p.o. box 1169  
iowa city, ia.  
52240

sub. \$4.00

institutions,  
libraries \$15

ANN ARBOR REVOLUTIONARY LESBIANS announce the first issue of their newspaper called SPECTRE. Thoughts, reactions, criticisms, asides, contributions are welcome. The worldwide radical lesbian conspiracy digs it!

Prices: 1-24 copies @ 16¢

25-74 @ 14¢

74-??? @ 13¢

Send to SPECTRE,

c/o Women's Liberation Office

1510 SAB U. of Michigan

Ann Arbor, Mich. 48104

!!!!!!We looked through THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS & then we read it & we liked it a LOT. It's a new WL paper by Philadelphia women. The first issue came out in March; has testimony, analysis, news, a beautiful short story, practical info, and more. We hope it gets around. Subs are \$3/6 mo., \$5/year. Get in touch with:

Through the Looking Glass

PO Box 1254

Philadelphia, Pa. 19105

Ames, Iowa Women's Liberation announces Women's Newsletter. You can get on their mailing list by writing to them c/o YWCA

Alumni Hall, Iowa State Univ.

Ames, Iowa 50010

To make contributions of money and articles for the newsletter, contact

Jan Secor

128 N. Hyland Apt. #1

Ames, Iowa 50010

phone

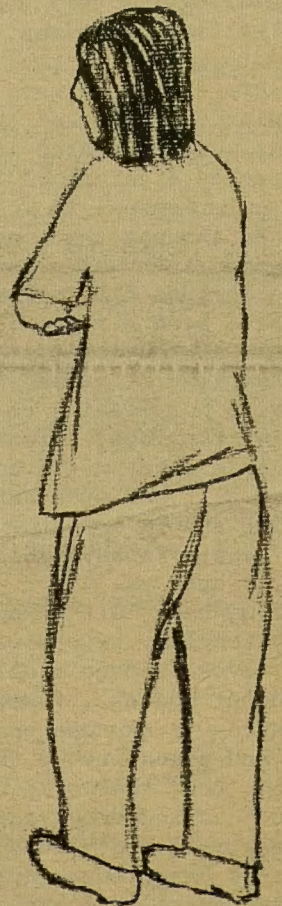
292-4139

Anthology of women's art & writing: Send poetry, short stories, photos, graphics, & color transparencies of paintings, sculpture, crafts, etc. to ANON, 4224 University Way, University Way N.E., Seattle, Wa. 98105

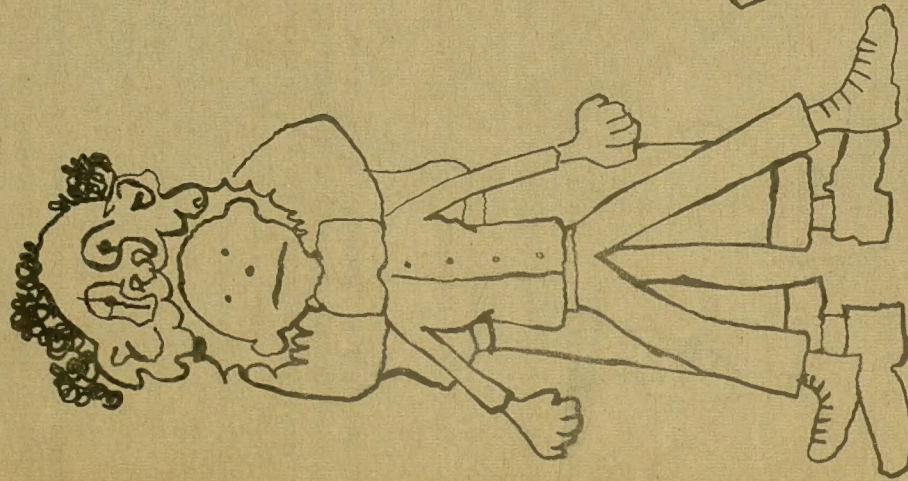
Feminists on Children's Media..... ...is a collective of women, from women's liberation groups and unaffiliated women, who are concerned about the stereotyped female image in children's books. Their current project is a bibliography of recommended books about girls, fiction and nonfiction, for people from 3 to 15 years old (???) It's titled LITTLE MISS

MUFFET FIGHTS BACK. Send a self-addressed stamped (12¢) legal-size envelope plus 35¢ to: Feminists on Children's Media PO Box 4315 Grand Central Station New York, New York 10017

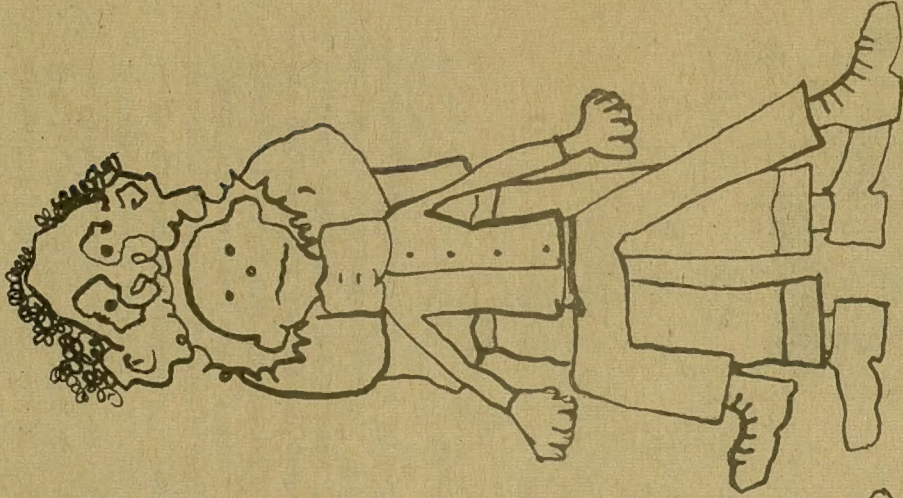
Day by Day, feminist appointment/calendar book, is still being distributed by the Minot Women's Collective. Price is now \$1.75 including postage. Send to: Minot Women's Collective PO Box 235 Minot North Dakota 58701



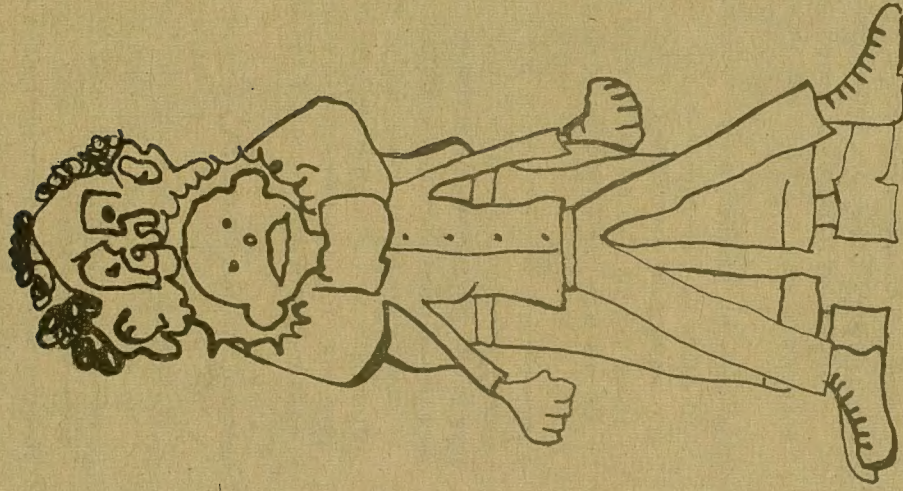
# SELF DEFENSE



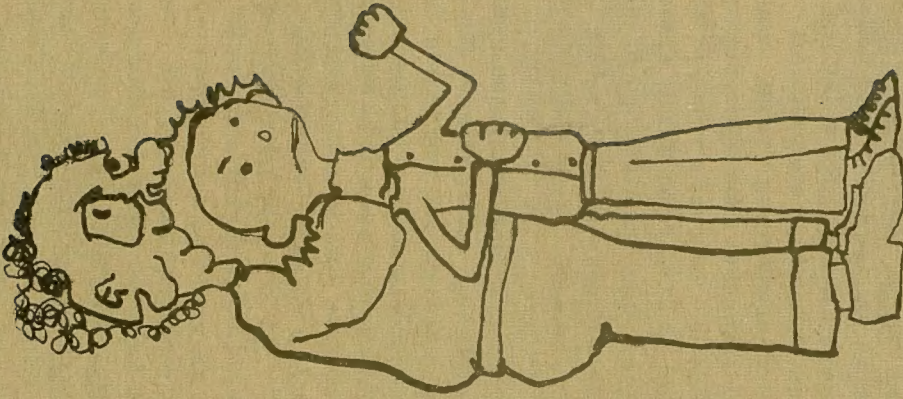
If someone grabs you from behind, a good defense is the instep stomp and the elbow jab. You must practise these techniques until you can respond with them quickly in times of crisis.



Lift your knee high, cock your foot, and look down at his ankle for aim. (It is good to wear strong sturdy shoes when walking alone.)



Then smash your heel down on his instep, scraping your heel down along his leg to make sure it hits target.



Follow up with an elbow jab to his stomach: Arc your body so that if you bring your elbow straight back along your side, it will connect with his stomach. The movement is short and quick. First bring your elbow out & then smash it back. Once his hold is broken, run.